NATURAL NEWS

The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

March 17, 1995

NATURAL AND HUMAN-INDUCED CHANGE IN MADAGASCAR
The Field Museum's International Symposium
June 2 - 4, 1995

The island of Madagascar supports countless species of plants and animals found nowhere else. Yet environmental changes -- over several time-scales and under both natural and human controls -- have caused the extinction of many species, and even survivors are now at grave risk. To mitigate the calamitous extinction wave now underway in Madagascar and to better understand tropical endangerment generally, we must carefully examine the processes that have shaped the island's landscapes, ecosystems, and cultures, as well as biotic responses to such changes. **Bruce Patterson** and **Steve Goodman** of The Field Museum have organized a three-day scientific meeting in Chicago to address these issues. The meeting will consist of presentations to the general public, invited technical presentations, scientific workshops, and contributed poster presentations organized around geological, anthropological, biological, and resource management/conservation themes. Invited speakers will include leading Malagasy and American researchers.

The symposium pre-registration fee of $10.00 (staff, volunteers, associates, etc.) includes entrance to all symposium sessions, a Saturday evening reception, light refreshments on both days and a copy of the abstract volume. After May 1, and during the symposium, the registration fee will be $15.00. Interested parties should contact the meeting's coordinator, **Jodi Sedlock** (x256, E-mail: symposia), for registration materials and/or additional information.

I am pleased to announce the appointment of **Susan Webb** as the Museum's Membership Manager.

Susan comes to us from the DuSable Museum of African-American History, where she was Director of Development and Membership. Her first day at the Museum will be Monday, March 27.

Willard E. White
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

CENTER FOR EVOLUTIONARY AND ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY

BIELER TAKES ON NEW EDITORSHIP

Rüdiger Bieler (Zoology) has recently become North American Editor of the *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society*. The London-based Linnean Society is the oldest natural history society in existence and publishes three internationally-read scientific journals. Rüdiger will have editorial responsibility for manuscripts submitted by North American authors.

NOON BALLOON -- TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 1995

The Noon Balloon for March 14 was given by **Dr. Thomas Lammers,** Assistant Curator, Department of Botany. Tom drew from his research on the evolutionary and biogeographic relationships of species of the lobelioid genus Clermontia in the Hawaiian chain to address several questions of general interest, such as rates of speciation, dispersal amongst islands, the distribution of ecological and/or morphological attributes, and the relative age of the plant species with respect to the relative age of their respective island domains. The spatial and temporal isolation of the Hawaiian Islands help to define a unique natural laboratory. These islands are more than 2,000 miles from the nearest continental land mass. The youngest island, Hawaii Island proper, arose no more than 1 mya, while the oldest, Kauai at the northwestern end of the chain arose about 5 mya. Species of *Clermontia* exhibit a relatively narrow ecological tolerance, and in general show relatively little divergence in their vegetative attributes. However, floral morphologies differ in a spectacular fashion among the 22 known species. Tom used a phylogenetic framework, based on both morphological as well as molecular data, to overlay the distribution of the taxa. He found many of the early derivative species to be restricted to the youngest island, and groups of quite derived taxa to be restricted to the older islands. The pattern widely recognized in most other groups of plants and almost all groups of animals is exactly the opposite, where early derivative taxa are found on the oldest islands, and their younger descendent taxa occur on the younger islands. Presumably, colonizers disperse from pre-existing sites to younger sites on the younger islands, in a "down stream" fashion. However, dispersal of Clermontia species reflects an "up stream" pattern. Tom suggested Clermontia species are themselves colonizers, showing a preference for open, unoccupied habitats typical of a relatively young, uncolonized island.

RECYCLING KICKOFF PRESENTATION -- *All Staff Invited*

All staff are encouraged to attend the Recycling Kickoff presentation in *Montgomery Ward Hall at 10 AM on Friday, March 24.* The details of our new and improved paper recycling program will be discussed. Keith Bell, from Recycling Programs, Inc., will join us to talk about paper recycling and to answer questions.

Come join us for donuts and coffee (save a cup; bring a mug!), learn what the new recycling guidelines are, and help us get the message across to those who can't attend. If you have questions about whether a type of paper that you use is recyclable, bring an example to the meeting, and we'll let you know. In addition, we'll discuss where the recycling stations will be located, who the recycling volunteer for each area is, and what the pickup schedule will be.